Ley Poetry vol 78.

THE GROVE of BARZAI, AND HIS ELEGY;

FROM

The LOVES OF OTHNIEL AND ACHSAH:

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

An INTRODUCTORY ACCOUNT of that Work.

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LONDON:

Printed for J. DIXWELL, No. 148, *St. Martin's Lane*, near *Charing Cross*.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

INTRODUCTORY ACCOUNT

OF

"The LOVES OF OTHNIEL AND ACHSAH."

"THE Loves of Othniel and Achſah," the poem from whence the two following pieces are taken, is tranſlated from the Chaldee, and maintained to be a remnant of Zabian learning, from the Arabians having *put* it into their language with other books of the Zabians. The tranſlator has furniſhed the work with an elaborate diſcourſe concerning the Zabians—their country, ſects, writings, gods, and rites; interſperſed with illuſtrative obſervations and curious remarks. The ſubject of the poem itſelf relates to the time of Joſhua, a. m. 2560, and reſpects the hiſtory of the perſons whoſe names it bears.

ACHSAH was the daughter of Caleb the ſon of Jephunneh, a principal man of the tribe of Judah, who, with Joſhua, eſpied the country of Canaan, and, with him, brought that true and favorable report of it to the congregation of Iſrael:—She * united the charms of admirable

* The annexed picture of Achſah, from the glowing pencil of a maſterly hand, ſhould not be omitted.

"Beautiful as the morning burſting from the reddened eaſt ſtood the divine Achſah.—"Her jetty hair fell graceful from her head upon her long neck, and flowed upon her ten-"der breaſt.—Her boſom whiter than the teemed milk.——The faireſt bluſh of opening

beauty with the unfading loveliness of virtue. The holy Writer, indeed, seems to have had a particular intimation of the amiableness of Achsah, from the paternal solicitude of Caleb for her happiness, and his complacential delight in her. He introduces her father asking her, "What "wilt thou?" She replies, "Give me a blessing; for thou hast given "me a south land, give me also springs of water.—*And her father gave "her the upper and the nether springs* *." Hence, divines have attributed to her the possession of extraordinary endowments; they say, the 'upper 'springs,' have a mistic reference to those blessings that descend from above, and are denominated dispositions to every kind of piety, benevolence, and chastity; the 'nether springs,' to every earthly enjoyment, which a compassionate Providence can cast into the lot of its peculiar and best beloved children. Such, and so blessed, was the heroine of our poem; but, not till Othniel had exchanged the horrors of war and the fatigues of the camp, for the endearments of wedded love and the felicities of domestic life.

OTHNIEL was the son of Kenaz, a younger brother of Caleb; he distinguished himself at the battle of Hebron, was approved by the God of Israel for his singular virtues, and elected judge and savior to the sacred family in succession to Joshua.

CALEB, reminding Joshua of a promise made to him at his return from espying the country of Canaan, *viz.* That he should possess Hebron; received permission to drive out the inhabitants, in order to settle his family there. He, therefore, drove out the inhabitants of Hebron; and

"spring tinged her cheek.—Her lips were like the purple grape, ripe for the wine press.
"——Her shape was strait as the upright cedar.—Her footsteps lighter than the western
"breeze, which bendeth not the tree-tops—nor boweth the heads of grass in the delightful
"groves of Hamath." Loves of Oth. and Ach. Vol. II. p. 226.

* Judges i. 15.

propoſed his daughter in marriage to the man who ſhould take Debir, or Kiriath-ſepher (as it was before called), which belonged to it.

OTHNIEL and Achſah had, very early, entertained a tender affection for each other; which, increaſing with their years, was reciprocally conſtant and laſting. *This* prompted Othniel to the enterpriſe of a war with the terrible Anakim; at the bare deſcription of whoſe gigantic anceſtors, the faithleſs Iſraelites were overcome with temerity and criminal cowardice!

IN the mean time, Achſah quits her father's houſe, and weeps in the vallies of Azem *. There ſhe recounts the graces and comelineſs of Othniel; but is more enamored with the tranſcendent ornaments of his mind. She traces, with mingled grief and joy, thoſe ſublime and virtuous ſentiments with which he delighted and repaid her attention; and thereupon prefers the memory of him to the love of rubies and the ſweet viſcidity of the honey-comb! Nor was the love ſhe bore him, a compliment, a temporary deſire of the enjoyment of Othniel's perſon; ſhe employed her underſtanding, and poured out her ſoul before the God of armies for his ſafety and ſucceſs;—To that God ſhe referred her higheſt felicity; in the beatitude of his preſence ſhe deſired more immediately to dwell with Othniel.

HER ſorrow, however, riſes to an extremity; and ſhe is repreſented as on the confines of the grave; when the angel Gabriel revives her, and conducts to the *beauteous Grove of Barzai*—This Barzai was the ſon of Zelim, a follower, perhaps a beloved domeſtic, of Moſes; who had, on the demiſe of his wife, retired to this lone place, and here bemoaned her

* "She preſs'd the riſing air with lamentation—ſhe pierced the azure pavement with "her woes—*Thy vallies, Azem! echoed her complaint—thy hallow'd groves, thy dreary caves reverberated ſadneſs!*" Book I. p. 1.

loſs. He found Achſah ſleeping, on his return from a ſolitary walk, and perceived her to be a daughter of affliction by the pearly drop which had rolled over her cheek.——At length they compare the ſources of their grief; and attributing them to the merciful and loving corrections of the Deity, reſign their minds to compoſure, in reliance on the Divine Wiſdom, which preſides over and guides every cauſe to its final event in his glory, and the certain welfare of thoſe who truſt in him.

AFTERWARDS, Barzai acquaints Achſah, that his daughter, Zeboim, poſſeſſed the beauty and the virtues of her mother; and, that, as he was ignorant of her abidance, he was afraid ſhe had been taken captive. "* Mayhap, ſays he, ſpeaking of Zeboim, thou filleſt up ſome "Idumæan triumph—or ſerveſt at the table of Arabian pride.—Perhaps, "—ah!—perhaps the treachery of power hath revelled in thine arms—"and wantoned in thy ſweets—ſullied thy bloom, and tainted every "charm †."

THUS they purſue reciting and examining the diſpenſations of Providence, and the mercies of their *Sçhaddai:* Till Zeboim turns her feet to the foreſt of Azar, to the lodgment of her weeping ſiſter, Achſah. Equaliſts in virtue and diſtreſs, they become endearing companions. While Achſah

* Book I. concluſion.

† It appears, that Zeboim was violently torn from her father by a company of men detached from the guards of the ſovereign of Arba, and carried to his court. Where royal virgins were appointed to receive her; and, with all the luxury and grandeur of an auguſt palace, entertain her wondering imagination, till the king ſhould command her to be brought before him. The dreaded hour arrived; Zeboim, with beauty enhanced by confuſion, is carried in great ſtatelineſs to receive his addreſſes and overtures; but, on ſeeing the idol monarch, ſhe ſwoons, and is borne by Sçhekadſen from the royal preſence to the couch of repoſe, where Baſçhama, the ſiſter of Sçhekadſen, attends her. However, ſhe was not long thus ſurrounded with diſtreſſes: a ſhout, mingled with the din of arms, hurries a conſternation through the court of Anak; Zeboim recovers, and, in anſwer to her prayers to Heaven, the army of Othniel reſcues her from impending ruin, and procures her deliverance.

mourns the abſence of Othniel, Zeboim bewails the ſame wars, which, in unrelenting cruelty, detain her beloved from her arms *; indiſcriminating Death threatening alike to each the period of her earthly happineſs.

BARZAI receives his great deſire in the return of his daughter; in which he rejoices, making it a meeting of ſincere and ſolemn inſtruction, and then dies.

ZEBOIM compoſes an elegy on the death of her father, which fills no inconſiderable place in this poem †.

ZEBOIM is diſcovered by Sçhekadſen, who leaves with her the circumſtances of the war, which continuing obliges his preſence. Soon after, Othniel ſlays Ahiman, Sheſhai, and Talmai (giants of the race of Anak), and takes Debir; in which capture he ſecures to himſelf the divine Achſah, to whom he is reſtored, under the advantageous and endearing characters of the Conqueror and the Lover. He found Achſah, and led her from the Grove of Barzai to her father's houſe, where their mutual loves received conſummation; for the inſpired penman ſays, "Caleb "gave Achſah his daughter to be the wife of Othniel §."

THE poem places the death of Achſah ‖ prior to that of Othniel.

IT concludes with an account of the conqueſt obtained by Othniel over ✝ Chuſhan-riſhathaim, king of Meſopotamia; the death of Othniel, and the lamentation made for him.

* Sçhekadſen was a worſhiper of the God of Iſrael ‡ though among the courtiers of Anak. There his affection for the daughter of Barzai commenced, and there the ſoft Zeboim met him in mutual tenderneſs. He was emancipated from the bonds of captivity at the interceſſion of Seraiah the brother of Othniel, and joined with him in the battle of Debir.

† Book III. V. I. p. 156. § Judges i. 13. ‖ Vol. II. p. 258. ✝ Judges iii. 10.

‡ Vol. II. p. 89.

BUT, before I quit the buſineſs in hand (being willing that the above-deſcribed poem ſhould appear in as reſpectable a point of view as this publication can place it, and not leſs deſirous, that this Account of it might be in ſome meaſure correſpondently intereſting), I muſt beg *here* to tranſcribe an elegant and majeſtic *Addreſs to the Deity on his Creative Power*, from Vol. II. page 160.—a liberty, if not incited, allowed by the tranſlator, in the *concluſion* of his *poſtſcript* annexed to the *Account of the Zabians*.

" WHERE haſt thou placed the boundaries of thy dominion?—or,
" who ſhall diſcover the borders of thy ſway, o King of many worlds?

" THOU ſitteſt upon an eternal throne.—Thou haſt ſtretched abroad
" thine arms, and the extremities of ſpace are covered by thine hands!

" ART thou angry, and who ſhall not tremble?—what can preſerve
" us when thou art diſpleaſed?

" WHEN thou didſt command exiſtence to ſpring forth—the aſton-
" iſhed void obeyed thee as it heard.——Thou didſt ſpeak—and the af-
" frighted ſtars began to roll.——The glorious ſun ſprung forth, and
" wondered at his light.——Chaſmal * rejoiced with the Ophanim *—
" the Iſçhim * roared aloud their joy!

" BEFORE this fair world, which we behold, appeared—thou didſt
" ſit in unimpaired happineſs.——Before the higheſt orb of day began to
" roll—or the moon ſent forth her paler beam—before the kindly breath
" of heaven began to blow, or unnumbered worlds were taught to wander in
" the width of ſpace—thou, o GREATEST! waſt eſtabliſhed in glory.

" BEFORE the heavens aroſe from out the wonderous maſs—or order
" ſpread itſelf around the vaſt abyſs—infinite ages had beheld thy ſplendor!

" WHEN yet no firey globe had ſtarted to its orb—nor light had pour-
" ed itſelf upon the cumberous load—thou hadſt an undecaying dwelling.

* * * Orders of angels.

" BUT thou didſt ſpeak—and the confuſed maſs was jumbled into " form.——The hoſt of heaven, like warriors for the fight, ſhone forth, " and ſought their rank.——They caught benignity from thee—and ſhed " their rays upon the new formed world.

" TIME began to glide on in ſilent revolutions—fixed by thine arm " in an unerring courſe, to move around the beauteous frame thy breath " had made.

" O FATHER of completed harmony! the wheeling worlds look up " to thee, their ſource.——For thou didſt circumſcribe the heavens, which " are round—and didſt fix the company of never-wandering ſtars—and " the ſeven * creatures which move among them thou didſt conſtitute.

" INTO the midſt of theſe thou didſt command the earth—and in the " centre thereof the waters flowed.——The air did blow throughout the " heights, in a courſe that hath not error.——Fire did claſh againſt fire " when thou didſt fix the unwandering ſtars.

" THE ſun alſo thou didſt bring forth, and the bright moon.

" CASTING fire into the middle, thou didſt guide the ſpirit of the " moon and of the air—of the circles of the ſun, and of the monthly " meetings.

" THOU didſt appoint the receſſes of the winds and of the melody of the ambient breath, and didſt eſtabliſh the paſſages of the ſun, and of " the moon, and of the wide air, and of all which it doth contain."

* Agreeable with the remains of ancient philoſophy found in the writings which bear the name of Zoroaſter—" *For the Father made ſeven firmaments of worlds.*" See *Note on the above Paſſage.* The ſame doctrine of the creation is inculcated by Mohammed, Al Kor. chap. ii. " Set his mind to the creation of heaven, and formed it into *ſeven heavens.*"

THE

LOVES OF OTHNIEL AND ACHSAH,

BOOK VII.

"YE ſweet retreats of ſacred ſolitude!—ye bleſſed ſcenes of undiſ-
" turbed peace!——No more ſhall I ſeek reſt within your ſhades.

" O YOU that dwell in pride, who find no joy in wealth! run ye un-
" to THE GROVE OF BARZAI—make ye haſte unto the vallies of
" Azar.

THE

GROVE of BARZAI.

I.

LOVE-ſoothing Seats of * Solitude, farewel!
Where peace-inſpiring Scenes rude ſighs repel;
Where Caleb's Daughter urg'd the lonely tread
By day, and nightly preſs'd the flow'ry Mead.——

II.

YE, whom no coſts for happineſs repay,
Who vainly paſs th' inſtructive hours away;
To Azar haſte, and Sober Muſing prove;
Lo! in the Vale aſcends the beauteous Grove.

* It will at leaſt be neceſſary to premiſe, that Achſah, on her leaving the Grove of Barzai, takes the retroſpect here verſified of the objects of delight found therein, which has a ſhort preface, thus prettily imagined and expreſſed. "Then Achſah, with voice, ſoft as "angelic ſounds, which trembled on the air, ſung her farewel notes among the ſorrowing "trees." Vol. II. p. 208.

" FAREWEL, ye roſes, and ye banks of fragrance!——Farewel, ye " hills of ſpices; and thou pleaſant verdure!—ye ſpreading myrtles, and " ye gentle ſtreams!

" FAREWEL, ye blooming flowers, and ye tender fruits!——In vain " ſhall ye henceforth open every bloom—In vain ſhall ye unboſom every " ſweet!

" SOLITARY ſhall all your pleaſant places be—in them the owl " alone ſhall flap his hideous wing, and the night-birds break the " gloom with dreadful ſcreams.——They ſhall lodge upon the rocks " of goats.

" EVEN in this hour of divineſt joy, I feel a gleam of woe, at part- " ing from your bleſt abodes.

III.

BUT I muſt bid theſe hallow'd Walks adieu!
Where breathe dill-ſcented Odors ever new;
With Banks of Roſes, blending ſweeteſt aid,
And tuneful Streams ſlow-rilling in the Glade!

IV.

FAREWEL, the kindly Solace of yon Bow'rs,
Th' empurpl'd Fruitage, and mellifluous Flow'rs!
——There food divine ſhall grateful bloom in vain;
There nectar ſmooth not Achſah's lips again.

V.

NOW from the mazy Windings of this Grove
Each Human Footſtep ſhall with mine remove.
——Fell Birds, of hideous note, ſhall thither fly,
And doleful ſhriek beneath the low'ring ſky:

VI.

YES! Here the dire Nocturnal Tribe convene,
All horrid ſcreaming, on the wing obſcene!——
While, as to greater Bliſs, from your Abodes,
With wiſtful Look I'm led, fit Haunt of gods!

" REJOICE, ye beaſts of Azar!—your fields are ſtill more deſart—
" your groves are ſtill more ſolitary!

" FAREWEL, thou aged palm!—no more ſhall Achſah extend her
" weary length beneath thy friendly ſhade.——Nor ſeek thy boughs to
" ſhield her from the ſultry noon.

" YE falls of water, and ye winding brooks! attune your murmuring
" notes to heedleſs winds.

" YE gentle gales! breathe ſoft no more—let the rough tempeſt
" howl through all the caves, and roar along the groves of Barzai.

VII.

YE ſavage Monſters, prowling o'er the fields,
Your Deſart more enlarg'd my abſence yields.
——Then, hunger-wreakful, Here purſue the Prey,
Iraſcive toil! a ſolitary way.

VIII.

AND thou, rever'd Idumæan Palm, farewel!
No more bright ſuns beneath thy ſhade I tell;
Beneath thy boughs I aſk no more the boon——
Screen'd from the night, and cover'd from the noon.

IX.

YE Floods, who, falling with præruptive ſweep,
In vaſt revolves roll furious to the deep—
Ye Brooks, with ſullen wave, who murm'ring flow,
Borne on with rapid winds recurſive go!

X.

YE Zephyrs, fanning ambient breath, no more!—
Their beauties hence to foreign plains reſtore.
——Let Tempeſt, ſcowling from his iron grave,
Here adverſe ruſh thro' each reſounding Cave!——

" FAREWEL, ye roſes, and ye banks of fragrance!——Farewel,
" ye hills of ſpices, and thou pleaſant verdure!—ye ſpreading myrtles,
" and ye gentle ſtreams!

" FAREWEL, ye blooming flowers, and ye tender fruits!——In vain
" ſhall ye henceforth open every bloom—In vain ſhall ye unboſom every
" ſweet.

" LONG ſhall your paths remain untrod—and unmarked by human
" footſtep all your groves."

XI.

——BUT I muſt bid theſe hallow'd Walks adieu!
Whoſe Banks profuſe Sabæan ſweets imbue;
Where verdant Lawns the raptur'd ſight approve,
And in the Break ſlow-gliding Waters move.

XII.

FAREWEL, the kindly Solace of yon Bow'rs,
The Fruits rich teeming, and the varied Flow'rs!
'Reft of their banquet, thoſe ſhall yield in vain;
Theſe on my lips no drops diſtil again.

XIII.

LONG ſhall theſe Paths, luxuriant with delight,
Be left to thickeſt gloom, and ebon night!
To wilds and waſtes their Pride, neglected, move
While Othniel and Achſah live and love.

XI.

THE
LOVES OF OTHNIEL AND ACHSAH,

BOOK III.

"MOURN, ye daughters of the valley of Shophat!——Weep,
" ye virgins of the fruitful plains!——The ſtrength of my head is
" departed.——The light of mine eyes is deſcended to the cave, and
" is extinguiſhed in the regions of darkneſs.——Lo! the ſupport of
" the weak is removed.——Lo! the portion of the wretched is taken
" away!——The comforter of the weary is no more—And the hope
" of the afflicted is departed.

A N

ELEGY on the DEATH of BARZAI.

YE Nymphs of Shophat's flow'r-enamel'd vale,
By ſtreams reſponſive pour the ſadd'ning tale;
Elude the ſoft endearments of the grove,
Give looſe to grief, nor raptures heed, nor love.

LATE of your train, I weep my lov'd, loſt Sire,
The ſilver'd ſaint, with whom my hopes expire.
He's gone, whoſe ſoul on fires cæleſtial fed,
Immingling ſilent with the duſky dead.——
Then ſound for him—with rigid Death away,
O Muſe, The ſweetly-doleful ſong, the mournful lay!

" MOURN, ye daughters of the valley of Shophat!——Lift up your
" voice in lamentation, ye children of the peaceful dwellings!——
" For the cedar of the foreſt is fallen—the palm of the plains is hewn
" down.——Sweet was his ſong to the harp—when he extolled the
" Ruler of heaven.——Sweet were the notes of his ſong—and ſkilful
" was his hand on the ſtrings of the lute.

" MOURN, ye daughters of the valley of Shophat!——Mourn for
" the death of Barzai!——Shed ye tears upon his grave, as one ſheddeth
" tears for his father—and as the widow howleth for the comfort of
" her ſoul.

YE Nymphs, who wander o'er the flow'ry vale,
On fleeting winds purſue the plaintive tale;
Let lamentations pierce the vaulted bound,
And thro' the peopled land my woes reſound.——
As the fall'n cedar of the foreſt lain!
As the hewn palm recumbent on the plain!——
He to the harp would tune the ſacred ſong;
On dulcet lute the theme of praiſe prolong;
To great JEHOVAH, ruler of the ſkies,
Bid heav'nly anthems in ſweet numbers riſe.
But now the pious minſtrel's ſwept away;—
Sound, ſolemn Muſe, O ſound the mournful lay!

YE Nymphs, who early thrid the neighb'ring vale,
Let groves and ſylvan haunts reſound the tale.——
Barzai deceas'd!——Ye youths lament, with tears
Each ſage the friend of his declining years.
As faithful matrons heave impaſſion'd ſighs,
When loving huſbands quit them for the ſkies;
So rue'd, to Death my Father falls a prey—
Symphonious ſound, O Muſe, the mournful lay!

" MOURN, ye daughters of the valley of Shophat!——Who is he
" that ſhall number his good deeds?——Or who ſhall count the bleſ-
" ſings of his hand?——But, ah! he is deſcended to the diſmal houſe.
" ——He is gone to the land of forgetfulneſs.

" MOURN, ye daughters of the valley of Shophat!——Shout your
" cries to the ſound of the timbrel.——O ſing no pleaſant ſongs to the
" harp.——Let there be ſilence through the nights.——For his eyes are
" encompaſſed with darkneſs.——He is deſcended to the regions of
" ſhade.——O my father!——I will remember thee throughout the years
" —I will think upon thy precepts in the times which are to come.——
" Peace be to thee, o my father! and peace to the abode of thy ſoul!"

Ye Nymphs, who roam recluſive in the vale,
Breathe my complaint to each remurm'ring gale.——
Who will the ſum of his good deeds demand?
Or who recount the bleſſings of his hand?
—Ah me! Why ruthleſs thus his worth explore?
On me my Father looks benign no more.
Him Death to gloomy regions did convey;—
Sound, ſweetly ſound, O Muſe, the mournful lay!

Mourn on, ye Nymphs, amid the dreary vale;
To timbrel's ſound awake the plaintive tale;
With timbrel's ſound, the air wide-rending, flow
The voice of miſery, the ſhout of woe!
But let no feſtive ſong with you be found,
No harp th'acclaim of joy exulting ſound;
Let ſilence reign, with dunneſt ſhades, thro' night,
Till Lucifer late lead the dawning light.
Hail! Thou, bleſt Viſitant in ſlumb'ring dreams,
Whoſe mem'ry as the light my ſoul eſteems;
My anxious griefs thy precepts ſhall alleve,
And conſolations in them I receive:

Peace to thy hallow'd Shade! I ſing each day,
And ſound thy worth in ſolemn ſtrain,
On lofty hill, on humble plain,
And ſtill invoke for thee, the Muſe, and mournful lay!

FINIS.